

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 30, 2003

Dear Conferee:

As you begin consideration of the FY04 Labor/HHS Appropriations Conference Report, we respectfully request that you consider fully funding S.1015, the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act. This law, which President Bush signed on August 15, 2003, provides \$100 million in much needed assistance to States and local jurisdictions for mosquito control. In order to effectively combat West Nile Virus (WNV), in addition to funding mosquito abatement procedures under MASH, we would also recommend that you provide additional funds to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under its existing authorities to address the WNV threat. These additional funds will allow CDC to provide states and localities with essential resources to conduct public health surveillance, prevention and education activities regarding WNV.

Mosquito-borne diseases represent one of the most serious and preventable public health threats for many of our states and localities. Over the past several years, the outbreak of the West Nile Virus in the United States has caused a significant drain to state and county budgets that are unaccustomed to dealing with this threat. Since 1999 states and localities across the country have been devoting increasingly limited resources to the eradication and control of mosquito populations in an effort to prevent the further spread of the West Nile Virus. Given the current budget woes of many of these state and local economies, it is imperative that the federal government carry out its basic responsibility to protect its citizens from such a severe public health threat through adequate funding of the MASH Act.

Currently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through its National Center for Infectious Diseases, provides limited funding to states to help with education and surveillance of mosquito-borne diseases. However, this money does not allow for the most critical first step toward preventing mosquito-borne disease---eradicating mosquitoes and their larvae. Without these treatments, mosquito-borne diseases will continue to spread at alarming rates across the country.

In 2003 alone, 4416 people have been infected with the West Nile Virus and 84 people have died. The disease has spread rapidly from the east coast to the west coast and is now present in 44 states. With our states and localities struggling financially, we cannot afford to wait another year to provide much-needed protection to all of our constituents from this very serious public health threat.

We look forward to working with you toward eradicating this deadly disease.

With warmest personal regards, we are



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

Mary L. Landrieu

Charles Schumer

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E. Benjamin Johnson

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